



Washington's

TRANSPORTATION PLAN



The Policy Framework

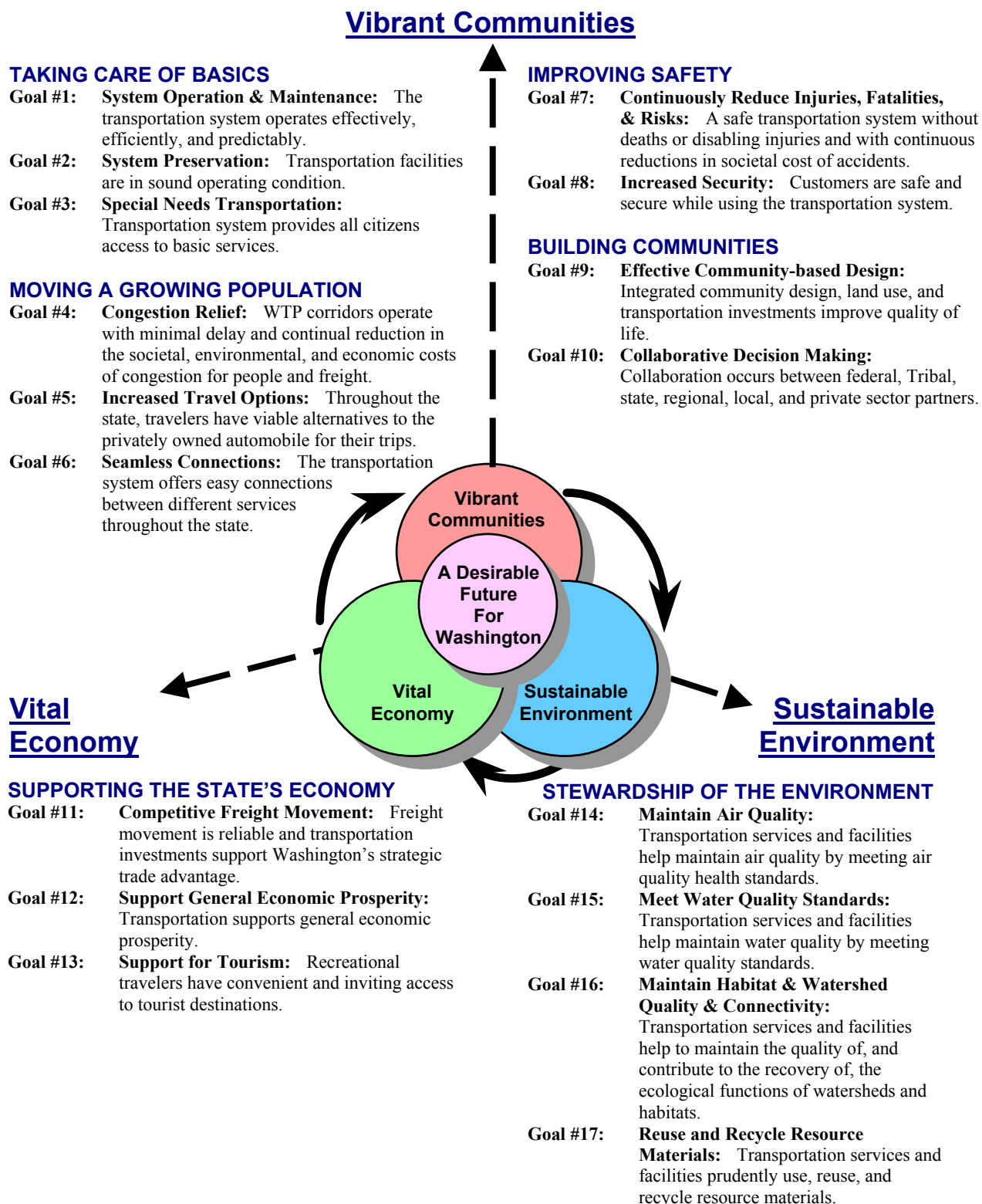
WTP lays out policy to identify transportation problems and provide solutions. This policy direction points the transportation system toward a vision for Washington State. If funded, the solutions identified in WTP will make the transportation system an asset to our communities, economy, and environment.

At the core of WTP is a vision for the state transportation system. The vision is a desirable future for Washington, its residents and its transportation system. This vision can be achieved through the balance of *Vibrant Communities*, a *Vital Economy*, and a *Sustainable Environment*. WSDOT and its partners created 17 goals to move forward in implementing the vision.

Goals: Each of the 17 goals represents a specific, mode-neutral transportation policy that establishes the primary emphasis of the plan and dictates how the vision will be achieved. Each of the goals has at least one objective.

Objectives: The 25 objectives are specific qualitative or quantitative targets that aim to achieve the WTP goals. The objectives define how the transportation system is analyzed. They identify deficiencies in the system and allow for development of solutions to meet a desired level of service.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS



I. WTP Policy Goals

This section discusses the WTP's 17 goals and its 25 objectives. Each element of the policy framework is linked, so that the goals and objectives are all aligned with the vision.

WSDOT and its partners used the objectives of the policy framework to compile a statewide inventory of transportation solutions to guide our state to a desirable future.

TAKING CARE OF BASICS

The citizens of Washington State have made a large investment in creating a statewide transportation system of highways, transit, ferries, railroads, airports, bike paths, and other facilities. Even though the system is strained by increasing demand, the state's priority is to maintain, operate, and preserve important components of the transportation system and provide basic services to all citizens.

Goal 1: System Operation and Maintenance

The transportation system operates effectively, efficiently, and predictably.

Objectives:

- Maintain the effective and predictable operation of the transportation system to meet customers' expectations.
- Increase the efficiency of operating the existing systems and facilities.
- Maintain vital transportation services in the event of a natural or other disaster.

The effects of sustained growth are exceeding the capacity of the existing system, hindering the state's ability to keep the transportation system operating effectively, efficiently, and predictably for Washington's citizens. While services and capacity need to be added, it is critical that the day-to-day workings of existing services continue.

Goal 2: System Preservation

Transportation facilities are in sound operating condition.

Objective:

- Preserve transportation infrastructure to achieve the lowest lifecycle cost (most efficient maintenance cost) and prevent failure.

Preservation is cost-effective investment that extends the life of a highway, ferry, bus, or other part of the transportation system.

Goal 3: Special Needs Transportation

Transportation system provides all citizens access to basic services.

Objective:

- Meet all basic transportation needs for special needs population.

All elements of the transportation system should be accessible to all citizens. While all system improvement projects and program incorporate design features to accommodate special needs, this goal provides policy direction for specific accessibility improvements.

MOVING A GROWING POPULATION

Washington's existing transportation system does not have the capacity, options, or organization to accommodate a growing population. The highway system is experiencing growing levels of traffic congestion in the state's largest urban areas. Given existing trends, delays are expected to increase over the next 20 years, spreading to other urban areas, intercity travel routes, and rural areas. Providing for Washington's future will require a more efficient transportation system that reduces delay caused by congestion, provides travel options, and connects transportation services together.

Goals 4, 5 and 6 on the following page consider a range of tools to achieve success. These tools include:

- *Roadway capacity expansion* – Adding more lanes to existing routes, building new routes, or other physical improvements to improve capacity.
- *Transit service and capital investments* – Establishing or increasing transit service, including the addition of vehicles and facilities.
- *Transportation Demand Management (TDM)* – Reducing travel demand by shifting people from single-occupant vehicles into other modes such as transit and ridesharing. Another technique shifts demand out of the peak periods using flexible work schedules or a compressed work week.
- *Passenger rail* – Improving service in the federally designated high-speed rail corridor.
- *Land use strategies* – Using land use plans and zoning to encourage development patterns that enhance the use of transit and reduce the number and length of trips.
- *High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes* – Dedicating lanes to provide more reliable and faster travel times for transit, vanpool, and carpool users.
- *System management* – Increasing the flow of vehicles on existing facilities through improvements such as ramp metering, signal coordination, information systems, and application of intelligent transportation systems (ITS).
- *Completion of local networks* – Building key arterials in the local system to provide missing connections in transportation networks.
- *Pedestrian and bicycle ways* – Providing safe and direct travel for bicycles and pedestrians.
- *Park & Ride* lots.

Goal 4: Congestion Relief

WTP corridors operate with minimal delay and continual reduction in the societal, environmental, and economic costs of congestion for people and freight.

Objectives:

- Reduce Person and Freight delay on WTP corridors
- “Travel Time” Objective to be developed in future updates.
- “Reliability” Objective to be developed in future updates.

The goal of congestion relief is “to improve travel time reliability and reduce travel delay for people and freight on the state highway system. These improvements should be measurable and noticeable to the public.”

Reducing delay will take a mix of coordinated investments in all elements of the transportation system. A single mode approach will not be as effective as the combined implementation of multiple tools.

Goal 5: Increased Travel Options

Throughout the state, travelers have viable alternatives to the privately owned automobile for their trips.

Objective:

- Improve existing travel options. “Travel Options” is defined as new options and better quality of existing options based on market demand.

Privately owned vehicles dominate transportation in Washington State as the most popular travel option. This goal aims to provide viable alternatives to the automobile to increase the efficiency of the transportation system. Alternatives such as transit, passenger rail, and pedestrian and bicycle travel need to be as effective, convenient, and accessible as private automobile travel.

Goal 6: Seamless Connections

The transportation system offers easy connections between different services throughout the state.

Objective:

- Create links and remove barriers between transportation facilities and services.

Washington’s transportation system must work as a single, interconnected system that allows people and goods to travel by multiple means. This goal aims to provide better linkages between transportation methods such as autos, transit, trains, and walking.

IMPROVING SAFETY

Washington State's transportation system is safer than ever. Improvements to the existing system and continued traffic safety education and enforcement further reduce accidents that result in death and injuries. Improvements also increase the personal safety and security of citizens using the system. Improving safety is also a policy directive incorporated in improvements to the transportation system. Projects and programs that solve congestion or provide more travel options also result in safety improvements. As an example, when a highway is widened to reduce delay, the whole highway section is improved to increase safety.

Goal 7: Continuously Reduce Injuries, Fatalities, & Risks

A safe transportation system without deaths or disabling injuries and with a continuous reduction in societal cost of accidents.

Objective:

- Reduce and prevent deaths, and the frequency and severity of disabling injuries and societal costs of accidents.

The state transportation system strives to provide the safest possible roads, buses, trains, and airports.

Goal 8: Increased Security

Customers are safe and secure while using the transportation system.

Objectives:

- Improve emergency response systems.
- Increase the security of the transportation system.

This goal aims to ensure that travelers and commuters are safe while using the state's transportation system.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES

The purpose of the state transportation system is to link regions and serve communities by moving people and goods throughout the state. “Building Communities” is the policy direction to ensure that communities participate in decision-making throughout the design and construction of system projects and programs. Public involvement is crucial to ensure that community needs are served by state investments in transportation.

Goal 9: Effective Community-Based Design

Integrated community design, land use, and transportation investments improve quality of life.

Objectives:

- a. Reduce impact on communities and their resources with the development and implementation of transportation projects.
- b. Increase integration of state and local interests in the development and implementation of transportation services and facilities.
- c. Balance state and local needs in the development and implementation of multi-modal transportation projects.

This goal provides policy direction on how to design and operate the transportation system in a manner that enhances communities. Transportation is an integral part of a community, whether the community is Washington State, a county, city, town, or unincorporated rural community. The transportation system must be designed to function as an asset to the community. This goal is implemented through the design of a highway projects, transit projects, and airport master plans.

Goal 10: Collaborative Decision Making

Collaboration occurs between federal, Tribal, state, regional, local, and private sector partners.

Objective:

- Increase partner satisfaction with the level of involvement in decision-making in the development and implementation of transportation projects.

Local jurisdictions, regional organizations, state and federal governments, and Tribal Governments in Washington work together to ensure that collaborative decisions best achieve the needs of all partners.

SUPPORTING THE STATE'S ECONOMY

Citizens and businesses rely on Washington State's transportation system to receive goods and services, go to work, haul raw materials to factories and fields, and bring goods and produce to market. The increasing globalization of the marketplace and Washington's growing population necessitate improvements to the existing system to support the state's economy.

Goal 11: Competitive Freight Movement

Freight movement is reliable and transportation investments support Washington's strategic trade advantage.

Objectives:

- Reduce barriers that delay the effective and reliable movement of freight.
- Maintain the ability to move freight and goods in the event of alterations to the Columbia/Snake River system as a transportation right-of-way.

Where transportation is pivotal to the economic development of the state or region, improvement to the system can be made in an effective, efficient, and collaborative manner.

Goal 12: Support General Economic Prosperity

Transportation supports general economic prosperity.

Objectives:

- Support statewide economic development through targeted transportation investments.
- Support economic prosperity in distressed areas through targeted transportation investments.

Washington's economy is heavily reliant on trade within the state, country, and internationally. This goal aims to improve rail, highway, and airport systems to increase the efficiency of moving freight to and from ports and goods to market.

Goal 13: Support for Tourism

Recreational travelers have convenient and inviting access to tourist destinations.

Objectives:

- Increase traveler information to tourist destinations.
- Improve the quality of tourists' travel-related experiences in Washington.

Washington's natural beauty and cultural heritage provide both recreational enjoyment and economic opportunities.

STEWARDSHIP OF THE ENVIRONMENT

WSDOT makes direct investments to improve transportation's interaction with the environment. For each project, WSDOT analyzes potential environment impacts. If potential impacts are identified, WSDOT strives to find less harmful alternatives or minimize and mitigate any adverse impacts. In addition to this cost that is included in every project, the highway system cost to address potential environmental concerns on the existing transportation system is referred to as "retrofit."

Goal 14: Maintain Air Quality

Transportation services and facilities help maintain air quality by meeting air quality health standards.

Objective:

- Reduce the impact of transportation facilities and services on air quality in conformance with the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality.

This goal provides policy direction in the selection and design of transportation solutions to maintain or improve air quality. Air quality issues are typically addressed in general transportation improvement projects, and all improvement projects in a metropolitan area are analyzed for air quality impacts. If a project does meet air quality standards it is modified or not constructed.

Goal 15: Meet Water Quality Standards

Transportation services and facilities help maintain water quality by meeting water quality standards.

Objective:

- Reduce water quality impacts caused by transportation facilities and services to comply with federal and state water quality requirements.

With more than 7,000 centerline miles of existing state highways, stormwater flowing from the roadway may potentially contain pollutants that could harm the environment. While the highways met or exceeded the environmental standards when they were built, many of the stormwater facilities on the highways must be upgraded to improve water quality and control the amount of water entering streams and lakes.

Investments in this goal will target specific retrofits to improve water quality.

Goal 16: Maintain Habitat & Watershed Quality & Connectivity

Transportation services and facilities help to maintain the quality of, and contribute to the recovery of, the ecological functions of watersheds and habitats.

Objective:

- Reduce the impacts of past projects and avoid or minimize impacts to watershed and habitat from current and future transportation activities.

Transportation systems can adversely affect watersheds and wildlife habitat areas. This goal is a policy direction to assess potential impacts to wildlife habitat areas and to identify where the existing system blocks the movement of wildlife or degrades watershed quality.

Goal 17: Reuse and Recycle Resource Materials

Transportation services and facilities prudently use, reuse, and recycle resource materials.

Objective:

- Minimize the use of resources and increase the use of recycled materials.

Recycling is a potentially cost-saving venture. An environmental cost-benefit analysis needs to be completed to estimate the actual costs incurred by WSDOT when the reduction in landfill and waste disposal costs are factored into the use of recycled and reusable materials.

State departments of transportation across the country have to deal with thousands of tons of waste each year. The goal of reusing materials is to reduce the need for natural resource harvesting, provide relief to landfills, and potentially reduce costs to WSDOT. Example materials include:

- Reclaimed asphalt pavement
- Scrap metal
- Guardrails
- Crumb rubber
- Tire chips
- Crushed concrete



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

